



BLM releases Anticline options

By DUSTIN BLEIZEFFER
Star-Tribune energy reporter

The Bureau of Land Management on Friday issued details of two additional management options for natural gas development in the Pinedale Anticline.

People interested in how energy development and wildlife are managed on the Anticline can review and comment on the revised draft supplemental environmental impact statement. The deadline to comment on the document is Feb. 11.

Based on public input, the BLM decided to draft the two new alternatives. One calls for a larger "core" area where oil and gas drilling could occur without seasonal stipulations to protect big game winter range.

That alternative would also suspend existing mineral leases on the east and west sides of the Mesa, also known as the Anticline. The BLM would have to specify adaptive management strategies to protect wildlife. Energy companies may also contribute to on- and off-site mitigation funds.

The second new alternative examines full-field development with wildlife stipulations as outlined in the 2000 document guiding energy development on the Anticline, which includes seasonal restrictions to protect wintering wildlife.

Questar Exploration and Production, Shell Exploration and Production Co., and Ultra Resources Inc. want to conduct year-round drilling within existing natural gas fields in Sublette County. The project area, 198,034 acres of federal, private and state land generally located south of Pinedale, contains an estimated 21 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Energy reporter Dustin Bleizeffer can be reached at (307) 577-6069 or dustin.bleizeffer@trib.com.